1: Rattray E, G-5 (ca. 1920)1932
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Kusase

Five to six months after birth

the infant will be named. A soothsayer may tell the father that a certain *Wen* (Nankane *Yini*), either his own, his father's, or grandfather's, wants the child as its *segr* (Nankane *segere*). The father will then take flour-water and a fowl and a guinea-fowl and offer them on that shrine, and after doing so, give the child some of the flour-water to drink. When sacrificing, he will speak as follows:

'"Here is an infant which I have begotten; you have said you want it; do not let a hawk (a witch) catch it; guard it well; if it grows and lives and walks by itself, I will give you a beast." After the infant has been given the flour-water to drink, the mother holds it and the father will name it after the object which is the abode of the spirit in the shrine, the *baŋa* (bangle) or whatever it may be, the infant's hand touching this thing while he names it.

'Later, the mother of the mother of the infant will ask that her daughter and grandchild may visit them, and, if the soothsayer says that they may do so, they will go to her for from three to five months.

'A man does not cohabit with his wife for two to three years, or even more, after she has borne a child; it depends on how soon the child is walking about. A child born with any teeth was formerly killed. Twins (*Ki kiris*) which die as infants are considered to have been fairies and are buried in the bush. A dead infant is buried in an ordinary grave near a path, a piece of potsherd being placed over the ear to keep out earth, the grave being filled in and a stone put on top to mark the place. "It is buried near a path so that it may find its way back to the compound for food; if it were buried far away in the bush it would get lost." A stillborn child, if formed, is buried as described above; if not formed, it is put in a pot and buried on the kitchen midden. A woman who dies in childbirth is not given a funeral custom; she is buried in the bush in an oblong-shaped grave which is then filled in. The husband will bathe for three days with leaves and the third day will shave his head. "The reason that the woman is buried far away is because, the husband if he saw her grave would die, and if he took part in any funeral custom for her he would die."'

Kusase Marriage Customs:

'If a man has already paid cows and discovers later that his wife is barren, he cannot claim them back. If, however, he has not yet paid them, he may then refuse to give them, in which case her father may take her away, but even then she may run back to her husband.'

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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had two little daughters, aged about 3, by different wives. One day the two children appeared very proudly each wearing a strip of cotton print about the waist. Omara explained that he had bought them these 'skirts', which had to be exactly the same in size and pattern. Had they been different in colour or size, or had he bought the children different presents, they would have been very upset and their mothers angry. He would have been accused of discriminating between them.

As this instance suggests, the closer children are in age or parentage or both the more should they be treated alike. The limiting case is that of twins and this deserves a special note. Twins (*leeba*)[1] are not greeted with joy among the Tallensi; but they are not destroyed; nor are they regarded as sacred in any circumstances; nor is the mother subject to moral censure or ritual penalties. But no woman desires to bear twins. One of the most efficacious medicines that can be placed in a ground-nut plot or among *ma'ana* (*Hibiscus esculentus*), *bɛt* (*H. sabdariffa*), or *bɛris* (*H. cannabinus*) plants—all of which supply favourite ingredients for sauces[2]—to prevent women from pilfering these crops is the medicine of twins (*leebà teem*) used in purifying the parents of twins. Anyone who defies this charm will have twins, it is said. I have seen women run on catching sight unexpectedly of a twin medicine charm dangling in a farm.

Tallensi believe that twins may not be 'human (*ninvoo*)'—i.e. complete social beings—at birth. As soon as they are born, a man who owns twin medicine is asked for medicine to mark their sleeping-place. If one or both die shortly after birth that is proof positive that he or they are *kɔlkpaaris*, malicious bush sprites, not human beings. They are then buried ignominiously in a special uninhabited place. A twin that survives the first month or so of life is tacitly assumed to be human and treated as an ordinary child. But if it dies in early infancy it may still prove to have been a *kɔlkpaarəg*, when the cause of its death is sought by divination. Its death will cause great distress to its parents, for it will have been treated with as much affection and devotion as a normal child, but it will not receive normal burial. Only when it reaches the age of about 4 [i.e. is old enough to have a following sibling (*nyeer*)] and is placed under the spiritual guardianship of an ancestor spirit, is a twin definitely regarded as a complete social being.

Tallensi seem to expect, as a matter of course, that at least one of a pair of twins will die in very early infancy.[3] The survivor then has to be

[1] They are always named *Yin* (Heaven) for the older and *Zuur* (tail) for the younger—*Yin*, 'because he sees the light of day first'; *Zuur* 'because he comes last'.

[2] *Vide* previously cited paper 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', by M. and S. L. Fortes.

[3] I can state with absolute certainty that every effort is made to keep twins alive. But the natives assert that the sheer physical strain of nursing and caring for twins is too much for most women. This is highly probable considering that

3: Fortes E-5 (1934-1937) 1949
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ritually 'pegged (*ba*')'—fastened to life, as it were—and is henceforth regarded as human. But whether either or both of the twins survive, the parents have to undergo a course of ritual purification after their birth. This is believed to act as a magical safeguard against the recurrence of such a misfortune besides cleansing them of the ill luck that has occurred.

In spite of this mystical background, twins that survive are regarded and treated as ordinary human beings. But there is one point on which very great stress is laid. Twins must be treated exactly alike by their parents. 'If you give one a portion of porridge you must give the other an equal portion; if you give one a penny you must give the other a penny', said one informant. If they are brothers, they will live together all their lives. If they are sisters they must be married to the same settlement[1] or to adjacent and interlinked settlements. For it is as if they are one person and yet are two. They are completely equal, completely equivalent siblings; and if they are not so treated, *ba ku nye somma*, things will not turn out well for them.

Rights and duties become important in adulthood, when they are actively claimed and discharged; and it is in the social relations of adults that the equivalence of siblings becomes conspicuous. It is best exemplified in three institutions, the levirate, the rules of inheritance and succession, and the extension of patrilineal, matrilateral, and sororal kinship ties. We have dealt with various aspects of these subjects in preceding chapters. Brief recapitulation with reference to the present context is all that is needed here. The kinship aspect comes up again in the following chapter. But before we look again at the levirate and at the rules of inheritance, it is worth noting some of the minor indications of the equivalence of siblings.

There is, firstly, the idea that the bride-price received for a girl should be earmarked for the payment of the bride-price for the wife of her closest brother. This convention is not strictly upheld, for the deciding

artificial feeding is unknown to the Tallensi. During our stay among them two pairs of twins and a set of triplets (who are treated in exactly the same way as twins) were born to people known personally to my wife and me. Even to a layman's eye it was obvious that the triplets were doomed from the first, both because they were so puny and because the mother was so utterly exhausted. Of the two pairs of twins, only one child survived the first few weeks of life, and this child, when last heard of, did not seem to have a very good chance of reaching childhood. I do not know what the incidence of twin births is among the Tallensi. The best-known owner of twin medicine at Tongo told me he had had five cases during the past two years or so and of these only one child was still alive. I knew only one pair of living twins, aged about 7 or 8, among all the children—easily running into three figures—whom my wife and I got to know throughout Taleland. Single survivors of twins are more common and I knew four. Thus the native view of the high mortality of twins appears to be justified by the facts.

[1] They are, of course, not a pair of successive sisters, so the concept of *nyaar* (*v. supra*, p. 253) does not apply.